

Scaffolding Switch Levels

Scaffolding is a familiar concept in early childhood. Vygotsky recognized the importance of scaffolding in allowing young children to move ahead in the social environment and build new competencies. Software has been found to have a scaffolding element which may lead to increased independence and involvement with the computer. For children with physical disabilities, technology may serve as a scaffold to help children communicate and play independently. Through specially chosen software, children learn to use a switch in an appropriate way to achieve desired results. The following six levels of switch progression can be used as a scaffold to teach switch skills along with a variety of other skills as software is integrated into early childhood activities.

Level 1 : Simple Switch Input

One switch activation will repeat an action for beginning cause and effect.

Switch Basics (SoftTouch)
Switch It! – Scenes, Pictures, Patterns (IntelliTools)
Press to Play Series (Don Johnston)
Circletime Tales (Don Johnston)
Storytime Tales (Don Johnston)
The Rodeo – Let’s Play (SoftTouch)
Fall Fun – Pledge of Allegiance (SoftTouch)

Level 2: Two Switch Input

Each switch would cause a different action.

Switch It! – Scenes (IntelliTools)
SwitchHitter (Switch In Time)

Level 3: Appropriate Time to Press Switch

Software presents child with auditory or visual cue. Child presses switch only after hearing or seeing cue.

Switch Basics – Aquarium, Tiger, Step Forward, Talking Fish, Celebrate, Cloud Cover (SoftTouch)
Old Mac’s Farm (SoftTouch)
Fall Fun – Halloween, Thanksgiving (SoftTouch)
Monkeys Jumping on the Bed (SoftTouch)
Five Green & Speckled Frogs (SoftTouch)
Forgetful & Friends (Don Johnston)
Eensy & Friends (Don Johnston)

Level 4: Double Input Selection and Appropriate Time to Press Switch

Child presses switch to initiate action. After auditory or visual cue, child presses switch again for desired result.

Old Mac’s Farm – Animated Books (SoftTouch)
Switch It! - Opposites (IntelliTools)

Level 5: Double Input Selection, Appropriate Time to Press Switch, and Object Placed in Specific Position

Child presses switch to initiate action. Child waits until specifically placed item is highlighted. Child presses switch a second time.

Switch Basics – Puzzles, Beauty Parlor, Barber Shop (SoftTouch)

Monkeys Jumping on the Bed – Find the Color, Find the Number (SoftTouch)

Old Mac’s Farm – Animal Match (SoftTouch)

Level 6: Double Input Selection, Appropriate Time to Press Switch, Object Placed in Specific Position and Intent to Communicate

Child presses switch to initiate scan. Child selects desired item as it is highlighted. Child presses switch a second time to achieve intended outcome.

Any software program can be setup with a scanning array through *Click It Discover:Kenx*, or *Discover:Switch*. When the child presses the switch, choices of hot spots in a program, words to communicate, or letters for writing, are highlighted through a scan. For example, *Millie’s Math House* (Edmark) can be set up with a scanning array similar to the one shown below for “Build a Mouse House.” The child presses a switch to start the scan of four boxes, then presses again to select the desired shape for the house.

